

How did Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry begin?

Unlike many outreach ministries that start with a committee, a budget and by-laws, Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry began with a tiny heart. That tiny heart belonged to Lucy, a member of our church whose heart began to fail during her first year of life.

For the next two years, Lucy's parents, James and Katie, spent a lot of time with Lucy in Dallas Children's Hospital. While there, they were each given a prayer shawl from a local ministry. These shawls were especially appreciated as they were spending long hours in chilly hospital corridors.

In 2010, upon hearing about prayer shawls from James and Katie, two Water of Life crochet/prayer buddies thought that the crocheted prayer shawls were such a great idea as a way to reach out to folks who need a special bit of comfort. The first prayer shawl went to a parishioner who was having a long stay in the hospital. She so appreciated having something to keep the chill off and wrap around her shoulders when she had visitors.

The second shawl went to another parishioner, Ellen, who had broken her arm. A handwritten note of encouragement and sharing of Jesus' love accompanied this shawl. Ellen loved her shawl but said many times how the letter had comforted and blessed her, so from that moment on, a letter was attached to each shawl sent out.

At the time, WOL was holding a Monday morning Bible study, and some of the ladies attending wanted to learn to crochet, so the group started meeting regularly to crochet shawls. Many more ladies joined and learned to crochet. Some were from Water of Life and others were from the community. Word got around, and soon Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry was sending about 80% of the prayer shawls they created into the community. A business-sized card began accompanying each shawl stating, "Jesus loves You. Lucy's Prayer Shawls. Machine wash cold, Tumble dry low."

Gradually, God led Lucy's Prayer Shawls to add new projects. As of today, baby blankets and hats are created and sent to two different hospitals, winter hats to a homeless shelter in Dallas, "loveys" (a tiny blanket with a crocheted animal) are made for little ones to hold onto, fringed flannel blankets are created for guys, and one of our favorites – Prayer Puppies. Our newest project, inspired by Trinity Lutheran Church in Stonewall, TX, is crocheted crosses. Before being sent out, each item is prayed over and blessed in a church service.

God has blessed this ministry with the funds to buy the yarn and other materials needed to make these "tangible hugs from Jesus." Many donations are received, and the group is also an Action Team with Thrivent. The ladies cause quite a stir and take advantage of the opportunity to witness when ten or fifteen of them show up at the yarn/fabric store all wearing Thrivent's *Live Generously* t-shirts. What fun!

To date, Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry has sent out more than 1,000 items to those who are grieving, are in the hospital, going through a tough time, or even celebrating a wedding or new baby. Memorably, they have sent shawls, blankets and prayer puppies to victims of disasters such as the West explosion, Hurricane Harvey, the tornado in Canton, the families of the officers who were killed in the July 7, 2018, shooting in Dallas, and the recent flood victims in Kerrville.

Several ladies currently working on "tangible hugs from Jesus", praying and supporting one another. One day one of the women commented that Lucy was the one who led them to this opportunity to reach out to each other and the community in this way, so with her parents' blessing, the group was officially named Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry.

Lucy couldn't talk, but she could smile. She couldn't walk, but she could reach out her hands in love. In March of 2012, at barely three years old, Lucy went home to be with the Lord. We pray that through Lucy's Prayer Shawl Ministry, the love and compassion of Jesus is shared and Lucy's sweet spirit is remembered.